



Maricopa County Animal Care & Control



Preventing Your Dog from Biting

There is no way to guarantee that your dog will never bite someone. But you can significantly reduce the risk. Here's how:

Spay or neuter your dog. This important procedure will reduce your dog's desire to roam and fight with other dogs, making safe confinement an easier task. Spayed or neutered dogs are three times less likely to bite. Contact AC&C about low-cost spay/neuter options for your pet.

Socialize your dog. Introduce your dog to many different types of people and situations so that he or she is not nervous or frightened under normal social circumstances.

Train your dog. Accompanying your dog to a training class is an excellent way to socialize him and to learn proper training techniques. Training your dog is a family matter. Every member of your household should learn the training techniques and participate in your dog's education. Maricopa County Animal Care & Control also recommends that you enroll your puppy in an obedience

class. This way, he'll be exposed to other people and other dogs.

Teach your dog appropriate behavior. Don't play aggressive games with your dog such as wrestling, tug-of-war, or "sicking" your dog on another person. Set appropriate limits for your dog's behavior. Don't wait for an accident. The first time he exhibits dangerous behavior toward any person, particularly toward children, seek professional help from your veterinarian, an animal behaviorist, or a qualified dog trainer.

If your dog exhibits any of the following behaviors, he poses a significant bite risk and you should consult a professional trainer for advice:

- Aggressive behavior toward other animals.
- Dominant behavior toward family members including refusal to get off the couch or bed.
- Possessive behavior including growling or snapping when you get

For more information on animal care, behavior or AC&C programs, contact (602) 506-PETS or visit pets.maricopa.gov

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too close during dinner or when he's playing with his favorite toy.

- Biting and growling out of fear.
- Territorial aggression such as barking and growling at joggers or bikers when they are in or near his home.

Be a responsible dog owner. License your dog and provide regular veterinary care, including rabies vaccinations. For everyone's safety, don't allow your dog off his leash or to roam. Remember, violating leash laws can also subject you to large fines, jail and civil law suits.

Make your dog a member of your family. Dogs who are well-socialized and supervised rarely bite. On the other hand, dogs who spend a great deal of time alone in the backyard or tied on a chain often become dangerous. Chaining or tying a dog encourages aggressive behavior. In addition, each year in Maricopa County, tie-outs account for a significant number of reported deaths of dogs that were unable to reach water or were hanged.

Err on the safe side. If you don't know how your dog will react to a new situation, be cautious. If your dog may panic in crowds, leave him at home. If your dog overreacts to visitors or delivery or service personnel, keep him in another room. Work with professionals to help your dog become

accustomed to these and other situations. Until you are confident of his behavior, however, avoid stressful settings.

If your dog bites someone, act responsibly by taking these steps:

1. Confine your dog immediately and check on the victim's condition. If necessary, seek medical help.
2. Provide the victim with important information, such as the date of your dog's last rabies vaccination.
3. Either the dog owner or the bite victim should report the bite to Maricopa County Animal Care & Control by calling (602)506-7387.
4. Cooperate fully with the AC&C officer who will be investigating the bite. Seek professional help to prevent your dog from biting again.
5. Don't give your dog to someone who wants a dangerous dog. "Mean" dogs are often forced to live miserable, isolated lives, and become even more likely to attack someone in the future. If you must give up your dog due to dangerous behavior, consult with your veterinarian, dog trainer or AC&C about your options. Because you know your dog is dangerous, you may be held liable for any damage he does even when he is given to someone else.